

Today's News - Wednesday, January 25, 2012

- Strongman has some strong words about "resilience" and "toughness" used "extensively by the media and government to try to contain the traumatized" Christchurch in its post-quake "afterlife" - the use "is glib, irrelevant and insulting."
- Lewis outlines the many causes for the decline of affordable housing: "Don't expect the problem to reverse anytime soon" because it "remains near the bottom of the problem-solving priority agenda."
- Bernstein looks at a trend in NYC that is seeing the conversion of public or institutional buildings into high-end housing; to affordable housing advocates, it's "a victory for the wealthy," while "preservation advocates look to condo developers as white knights."
- Popova suggests perhaps its time to revisit Rudofsky's 1964 "Architecture Without Architects" and what "ancient cities in Sudan and China can teach us about designing better communities."
- Seville stands to lose its UNESCO World Heritage Site status if Pelli's 40-story tower goes forward - though the new city council "might try to lower the height of the building."
- Badger examines a new NTHP report that "puts big numbers behind the finding that the greenest buildings aren't in fact state-of-the-art ones; they're the ones we already have."
- Hume cheers new projects that prove "heritage is the way of the future...the case for conservation, practical as well as cultural, is self-evident. It pays off civically and economically" + Details of plans for one project that will revitalize a long-empty Toronto treasure.
- There could be a wrecking ball heading towards a mid-century modern treasure in Fort Worth preservationists didn't even know existed until a few years ago: it was "abandoned since 2008 and deteriorating rapidly. Amon Carter III said it is time to move on."
- Heathcote cheers Pawson's plans for London's Design Museum: it "could do for design what Tate Modern did for contemporary art."
- Wainwright welcomes the museum's move to the Commonwealth Institute, but wonders "will it work in the wasteland of the west...tightly hemmed in by three 'generic' housing blocks" he calls "humility OMA-style."
- The Community College of San Francisco considers a new ZGF-designed home for a massive, "dazzling" mural by Diego Rivera that has been languishing in semi-obscenity.
- Q&A with Piano re: "his chivalrous addition" to the Gardner Museum: "Bold in its restraint, his new building is not the tail wagging the dog" - "our decision was not to compete at all."
- Abu Dhabi sets new timetable for Nouvel's Louvre and Gehry's Guggenheim (alas, no mention of Hadid and Ando Saadiyat Island projects).
- Memphis Botanic Garden approves plans for a "box-in-a-box" outdoor stage that will fit into a green hedge and be framed by towering trees."

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Resilience, Toughness and Damage: In Christchurch, 'resilience' is a phrase used extensively by the media and government to try to contain the traumatised city's afterlife...perhaps this usage is a sleight of hand that conceals more than it reveals...The question of people's toughness in the face of repeated blows to their financial and social security is glib, irrelevant and insulting. By Lara Strongman- Australian Design Review

Decline of affordable housing has many causes: Don't expect the problem to reverse anytime soon...affordable housing remains near the bottom of the problem-solving priority agenda. By Roger K. Lewis- Washington Post

Buildings Once Institutional, Now Exclusive: ...conversion of public or institutional buildings into upper-class housing...To housing advocates, those conversions represent a victory for the wealthy...sometimes preservation advocates look to condo developers as white knights...And what developer wouldn't rather deal with 10 buyers who don't need mortgages than dozens of buyers who do? By Fred A. Bernstein- New York Times

The Collaborative Design of Ancient Hive Cities: What the ancient cities in Sudan and China can teach us about designing better communities: In 1964, Bernard Rudofsky examined..."Architecture Without Architects: A Short Introduction to Non-Pedigreed Architecture" — a fascinating lens on "primitive" and communal architecture, exploring both its functional value and its artistic richness... By Maria Popova- The Atlantic

Seville's Unesco status threatened by 600ft Pelli tower: Spanish city could lose world heritage status over plans to build 40-storey skyscraper amid cluster of 13th-century buildings...El País newspaper said the report had been leaked by city hall authorities...a sign that the new city council...might try to lower the height of the building.- Guardian (UK)

Why the Most Environmental Building is the Building We've Already Built: ...a new study...puts big numbers behind the finding that the greenest buildings aren't in fact state-of-the-art ones; they're the ones we already have...study suggests the city of Portland, for example, could meet 15% of its emissions-reduction goals over the next decade just by reusing the 1% of its buildings the city expects to demolish over that time. By Emily Badger -- National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP); Preservation Green Lab [links]- The Atlantic Cities

Heritage is the way of the future: Now that Crate and Barrel's CB2 has opened its first Toronto outlet, in a restored 19th-century storefront, the case for heritage preservation is there for all to see...On the other hand, Odette House, an exquisite late-1800s Second Empire residence...was quietly torn down last week to make way for — what else? — a condo...as we move into a world of taller buildings...the case for conservation, practical as well as cultural, is self-evident. It pays off civically and economically. But we're not there yet. By Christopher Hume- Toronto Star

Yonge Street landmark finally to be revitalized in Toronto: ...site contains the historically designated Canadian Bank of Commerce Building...plans to completely restore the four-storey portion of the bank and erect a 60-storey mixed-used development behind the historic landmark. -- Darling & Pearson Architects (1905); Hariri Pontarini Architects; ERA Architects; Cecconi Simone Interiors; Janet Rosenberg and Associates - Canadian Architect

Demolition looms for architectural gem in west Fort Worth: Designed by one of the most influential midcentury architects...the Andrew Fuller House...may be doomed to a wrecking ball...abandoned since 2008 and is deteriorating rapidly. Amon Carter III said it is time to move on. "It's definitely a historic landmark...I did everything I could to preserve the house." -- A. Quincy Jones; William Haines; T.H. Robsjohn-Gibbons (1953) [slide show]- Fort Worth Star-Telegram (Texas)

From Commonwealth Institute to Design Museum: With his conversion of a former exhibition space, John Pawson could do for design what Tate Modern did for contemporary art...The designs attempt to retain the essence of the theatrical interior...demonstrate that this was always a great roof over a dim space...its success would see design firmly established as an equal to, rather than a subsidiary of, art. By Edwin Heathcote -- Terence Conran; Deyan Sudjic; OMA- Financial Times (UK)

Santiago Calatrava can still be seen in modified plans for Denver International Airport: ...new design is more of a box than the bird [he] envisioned...dominated by clear glass rather than white steel. And while it may not be as finessed, it is still a modern expression that fits in with design of DIA... By Ray Mark Rinaldi -- Gensler; AndersonMasonDale Architects [images]- Denver Post

Go West? The Design Museum's move to the Commonwealth Institute provides a welcome new life for this neglected building, but will it work in the wasteland of the west? ...tightly hemmed in by three "generic" housing blocks...humility OMA-

style...perhaps we should not underestimate the Midas touch...heralding the revival of the Kensington Conranopolis. By Oliver Wainwright -- RMJM (1960s); John Pawson; Deyan Sudjic; Terence Conran [images]- BD/Building Design (UK)

Diego Rivera's Mural May Not Languish in Semi-Obscurity Much Longer: Plans are afoot to relocate..."Pan-American Unity" from its current cramped quarters to a new building on the Community College of San Francisco (CCSF) campus...a proposal to create a new exhibition space for the 22 x 75-foot mural. It's a a dazzling work of art... -- Timothy Pflueger (1940); Jim Diaz/KMD Architects [images]- Curbed San Francisco

Renzo Piano on His Chivalrous Addition to the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum: Bold in its restraint, Piano's new building in glass and bronze is not the tail wagging the dog...."our decision was not to compete at all." [slide show]- Artinfo

Abu Dhabi sets new timetable for delayed Louvre, Guggenheim museums: ...approved a broad range of development projects...with a focus on social services, housing, health and education...approved the budgets and opening date for the Saadiyat Island museums, but gave no details. -- Frank Gehry; Jean Nouvel (AP)- Washington Post

Memphis Botanic Garden board OKs new performance venue: ...a permanent, outdoor stage overlooking lush, redefined grounds for audiences called "The Live Garden"...box-in-a-box design: a thin white frame floating within a denser dark structure...fitted into a green hedge and framed by towering trees. -- archimania [image]- Commercial Appeal (Memphis)

Coop Himmelb(l)a: Martin Luther Church, Hainburg, Austria

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